6.11 Lake Pulaski

The proposed Lake Pulaski facility has a capacity of 8.5 MW AC and is located in Section 15 of Buffalo Township in Wright County. The site is located east of the city of Buffalo, west of Eaken Avenue NE and north of 20th Street NE. Aurora anticipates that the facility will be accessed through a newly constructed access road off of Eaken Avenue Northeast. Preliminary plans anticipate a development area of approximately 63.2 acres within the 75.8 acres of Aurora's site control. Electricity from the facility would be delivered to Xcel Energy's Lake Pulaski Substation located approximately 0.5 miles south of the facility.

The facility is located within the Minnesota and Northeastern Iowa Morainal Section of the Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province. Land cover within the preliminary development area (Table 26) is dominated by cultivated crops (87 percent). In comparison to the land cover in the study area surrounding the Lake Pulaski Substation, the location of the facility avoids the developed area of Buffalo to the west and the lakes to the east (Figure 47).

Table 26: Lake Pulaski Facility land Cover

Land Cover	Control Area		Development Area		Study Area	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Open Water					1,531.0	12.2%
Developed, Open Space	0.3	0.4%			490.0	3.9%
Developed, Low Intensity	-	-		-	605.9	4.8%
Developed, Medium Intensity					244.1	1.9%
Developed, High Intensity					28.2	0.2%
Barren Land						
Deciduous Forest	9.8	13.0%	7.06	11.2%	1,364.2	10.9%
Evergreen Forest	-	-	-	-	57.3	0.5%
Mixed Forest	-	-	-	-	4.6	0.0%
Shrub/Scrub	-	-		-	469.5	3.7%
Grassland Herbaceous	-	-		-	258.2	2.1%
Pasture/Hay	4.3	5.7%	0.61	1.0%	2,914.6	23.2%
Cultivated Crops	59.7	78.8%	54.70	86.5%	4,239.6	33.8%
Woody Wetlands		-		-	6.3	0.1%
Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands	1.7	2.2%	0.8	1.3	340.0	2.7%
Totals	75.8	100.0%	63.2	100.0%	12,553.4	100.0%

6.11.1 Effects on Human Settlement

The proposed facility location is a cultivated parcel in a rural area with scattered rural residences. The nearest home is located approximately 280 feet northeast of the preliminary development area. Construction of the facility will not result in displacement of any homes or businesses. The facility is located in an area zoned as AG-Agricultural District

by Wright County. Solar farms are not specifically addressed in the Wright County Zoning Ordinance.

128 The area of site control is designated as Agricultural in the Wright County Land Use Plan.

There is a snowmobile trail located approximately one-half mile east of the facility. There are no other recreational trails, state, county or local parks within one-half mile of the proposed facility. Construction and operation of the facility would not impact the use of nearby recreational resources.

No mitigation measures beyond those described in Section 5.2 are identified for the Lake Pulaski facility.

6.11.2 Effects on Land Based Economies

The proposed facility would remove approximately 55 acres from agricultural use. Aurora's proposed Annandale and Montrose facilities are also proposed in Wright County. If all three of the Aurora facilities were constructed, approximately 159 acres of farmland would be taken out of production for the useful life of the project (estimated to be at least 25 years).

Approximately 10 acres (16 percent) of the developed area are considered to be prime farmland and 13 acres are considered to be prime farmland if drained (Table 13). Within the study area surrounding the Lake Pulaski Substation, approximately 40 percent is considered to be prime farmland and 21 percent is considered to be prime farmland if drained. The prime farmland exclusion in Minnesota Rule 7850.4400, Subpart 4 does not apply to the Lake Pulaski facility due to its proximity to Buffalo.

The proposed project would not impact tourism, mining or mineral extraction activity, or forest resources of economic importance.

No mitigation measures beyond those described in Section 5.3 are identified for the Lake Pulaski facility.

6.11.3 Effects on Archaeological and Historic Resources

No archaeological sites were identified in a survey of the Lake Pulaski facility. No mitigation measures beyond those identified in Section 5.4 are proposed.

6.11.4 Effects on Natural Environment

There are no rivers, streams or lakes within the area of facility site control, although a small pond is located within the area of land control, north of the preliminary development area.

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¹²⁸ Wright County Comments, September 25, 2014.

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Field delineations performed in the summer of 2014 show 1.09 acres of Type 2 wetlands (wet meadow) within the preliminary development area. 129

The preliminary design for the facility anticipates grading of approximately 62.8 acres of the site during construction. 130

No mitigation measures beyond those described in Section 5.5 are identified for the Lake Pulaski facility.

6.11.5 Effects on Rare and Unique Natural Resources

A review of the NHIS database did not identify any documented instances of state or federally listed endangered, threatened or special concern species within one mile of the area of site control for the Lake Pulaski facility.¹³¹

No mitigation measures beyond the field survey described in Section 5.6 are identified for the Lake Pulaski facility.

¹²⁹ Appendix C

¹³⁰ Application, at Appendix F

¹³¹ Application, at p. 81







